

1 Timothy 2:8-15

Two weeks ago, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, lifted the1994 ban on women in military combat. Was this a wise decision? What are the problems with allowing women in combat? After all, if women want to risk their lives on the battlefield, why should it be of any concern to our small town Wisconsin church? What difference should it make to us or should we just leave well enough alone?

Compare this role reversal with a story from Elisabeth Elliot who spent years ministering to the Auca Indians in Eastern Ecuador.

Once, in the bungling way of foreigners, I "brought down the house," as it were, by picking up a man's eight-foot spear and pretending to be about to hurl it. They died laughing. If they had not taken it as a joke, I would have been in serious trouble. Women had nothing to do with spears. Their power did not lie in being equal with men but in being women. Men were men and women were glad of it. They understood that this was how things were arranged originally, and they liked it that way.¹

What is the difference between a culture that pushes women into the front lines of combat versus a culture where a spear wielding woman was inconceivable? The core issue is a radical feminist ideology that has been not only transforming our culture for the past fifty years but also infiltrating the church with negative consequences upon individuals, families and churches.

The correction to this dangerous influence is a return to a proper Biblical femininity found in passages like this one in 1 Timothy 2.

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; 9 likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with

modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, **10** but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. **11** Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. **12** I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. **13** For Adam was formed first, then Eve; **14** and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. **15** Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

I hope my preaching through this passage might generate pity for me or at least a touch of sympathy due to the potential for controversy and divisiveness. This is a hot topic and some pastors would not touch it with a ten foot pole—or an eight foot spear— but not only is too important to pass over, but there is is—right in the text before us, so it is imperative that we move forward in a careful but confident manner.

Verses nine and ten are clearly the least controversial verses in this passage and something most women would agree with. In fact, let me start off with a lighthearted story. About six years ago I was the coach of a junior Bible quiz team and the material they were memorizing that year included 1 Timothy. It just so happened that Marianna Mickelsen stood up and was quoting verse nine. *Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire.* And while she was quoting the verse, as girls are prone to do with their long hair, she was braiding her hair while she quoted the verse about not braiding her hair! She was only eleven at the time and it was really a cute thing. It also illustrates that this verse is not forbidding braided hair per se, but rather an ostentatious, costly adornment whose only purpose is to draw attention to the woman. Like the Proverbs 31 woman, a woman who professes faith in Christ will wants to adorn herself with godliness and good works. I appreciate Marianna because she not only dresses modestly, but as I speak, she is practicing good works by playing the piano at Zion church because they sometimes still need her to play for them.



As you no doubt guessed, the controversial section begins with verses eleven and twelve. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. These verses have been dissected ad nauseum for the past several decades. For some people, their initial reaction will look something like this picture but I want to convince you, from Scripture, that this is not true in the slightest way.

There are two camps of people who interpret this verse. First, there are the group called complementarians who take the verse at face value. The verse means that women are not permitted to teach and have authority over a man. They are called complementarians because

they understand the Bible teaching that men and women have different but complementary roles. Men and women are full equal in essence before the Lord. Both are stamped with the image of God. Both are fallen and in need of a Savior and both receive mercy and grace through faith in Christ. Men and women are fully equal but they not only have different strengths and weaknesses, as almost everyone universally recognizes, but Scripture also teaches that they have somewhat different roles.

The other camp of people are called egalitarians because they hold to full equality between the genders. They do not believe that the Bible prohibits women form doing anything. There is no role or no task that women are prohibited from doing and those who teach such a thing, are twisting Scripture in order to maintain power and control over women. It is not surprising that egalitarians do not back down from the title "evangelical feminists."

The stated goal of this group is as follows.

The goal of evangelical feminism is that men and women be allowed to serve God as individuals, according to their own unique gifts rather than according to a culturally predetermined personality slot called "Christian manhood" or "Christian womanhood."²

So you can see that we have a dilemma on our hands. The first group takes the plainest reading of the text and the second group believes that this text, and others like them, don't mean what they appear to mean.

We do need to make certain that we distinguish between essence and role. Both positions hold to an equality of essence as I described before but the difference lies in the roles for men and women. Egalitarians hold to a full equality in roles while complementarians believe that the roles of men and women are complementary.

COMPLEMENTARIAN	EGALITARIAN
Equal in Essence	Equal in Essence
Complementary in Roles	Equal in Roles

To some of you this may seem like we are splitting hairs. After all, since women are just as smart and capable as men and since they are extremely successful in the marketplace and only obvious gender bias keeps them from being even more successful, why would the church adopt such an archaic view point that restricts women? When it is difficult enough to find workers for all of the needs in a local church, why would we prohibit women from doing anything? Even if it is not a power play where men get to hold all of the reins of power, at the very least, it seems like we are shooting ourselves in our proverbial foot.

Listen to an explanation from Pastor Mark Dever as to why this issue is important.

Dear reader, you may not agree with me on this. But it seems to me and others (many who are younger than myself) that this issue of egalitarianism and complementarianism is increasingly acting as the watershed distinguishing those who will accommodate Scripture to culture, and those who will attempt to shape culture by Scripture. You may disagree, but this is our honest concern before God. It is no lack of charity, nor honesty. It is no desire for power or tradition for tradition's sake. It is our sober conclusion from observing the last

50 years. Egalitarianism is novel. Its theological tendencies have not had such a long track record. And the track record they have had so far is not encouraging. Of course there are issues more central to the gospel than gender issues. However, there may be no way the authority of Scripture is being undermined more quickly or more thoroughly in our day than through the hermeneutics of egalitarian readings of the Bible. And when the authority of Scripture is undermined, the gospel will not long be acknowledged. Therefore, love for God, the gospel, and future generations, demands the careful presentation and pressing of the complementarian position.³

Do you see? The issue is Biblical inerrancy and faithfulness. I do not have time to present to you all of the egalitarian interpretations of this passage but I can tell you that all of them are merely attempts to explain away the plain meaning of this text. Furthermore, as Pastor Dever argues, the way in which they explain away the text is the same way that liberals use to explain away other parts of Scripture.

Wayne Grudem did a study on mainline denominations and recognized that all of these denominations followed the exact same progression.

- 1. Abandoning Biblical inerrancy
- 2. Endorsing the ordination of women.
- 3. Abandoning the Bible's teaching on male headship in marriage.
- 4. Excluding clergy who are opposed to women's ordination.
- 5. Approving homosexual conduct as morally valid in some cases.
- 6. Approving homosexual ordination.
- 7. Ordaining homosexuals to high leadership positions in the denomination.⁴

Therefore, all denominations that ordained homosexuals first ordained women. This does not mean that all denominations that ordain women will eventually ordain homosexuals but that ordaining women is a necessary first step in that progression. Because of the way in which they approach Scripture, it takes an incredible amount of discipline to avoid careening down the slippery slope toward full blown liberalism. This is especially true when you realize that all of these liberal, mainline denominations at one time were conservative and evangelical from top to bottom.

Now that you understand the larger picture—that ultimately this is a matter of Biblical inerrancy, let's move forward to understanding a proper interpretation of this passage.

Let's start with verse twelve. *I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.* "Teaching" and "having authority" are not the same thing but teaching is a primary way to express authority. For example, week after week I preach a message that defines what we believe and how we should live out the Bible's teaching. Even though I do not stand up here and command you to do such and such or demand that you listen to me, I think we all realize that that the person who has the primary role of teaching in a church has a great deal of influence in a local body of believers. Even if you tend to forget what I say after we sing the final song, I guarantee you that if I started to pronounce a bunch of radical heresy week after week, you would not forget any of it! By my teaching, I am not asserting myself as your sovereign authority but I am laying out, from the Bible, how God's word is your

sovereign authority. Therefore, the position of primary teacher is also a position of primary authority and Scripture has laid down that this role is to be filled by a man and not by a woman.

The way that this works itself out in churches that hold to complementarianism is to limit the role of elder to men, and here's why. If you compare the list of qualifications of elders and deacons from 1 Timothy chapter three, you will quickly see that the big difference between the two is that elders need to be able to teach while deacons do not.

Elders—1 Timothy 3:1-7	Deacons—1 Timothy 2:8-13
Must be blameless	Blameless
Husband of one wife	Husband of one wife
Temperate	Reverent
Sober minded	Not double-tongued
Not given to wine	Not given to much wine
Not greedy for money	Not greedy for money
Rules his own house well	Ruling their children and houses well
Able to teach	

From this and other Scriptures we see that the role of an elder is to teach and govern, or as Paul says here, to teach and to have authority. Therefore, even though I am paid elder, I am still just one of our four elders whose God given responsibility is to teach and have authority. The exercising of this authority comes predominantly through the ministry of teaching. 'teaching' and 'having authority' are not the same thing but they are intricately woven together.

Paul is not only clear about the actual prohibition, but he also laid out clear reasons for the prohibition, the first one in verse thirteen. *For Adam was formed first, then Eve.* The reason for the prohibition is founded in the order of creation. Paul was obviously referring to Genesis chapter two where God formed Adam first from the dust of the ground and Eve was formed second from Adam's rib.

This reason simply states that the different roles of men and women are based in the order of creation. Everyone recognizes that men and women are complementary is every way. Our bodies are complementary. Our personalities are complementary and now here we see that God intended, based on the order of his creation, to also make our roles complementary.

Our opponents attack Biblical gender roles in the same way they attack the Bible's stance on homosexuality. The trump card for those who promote homosexuality is to state that Jesus never said anything about homosexuality. While Jesus never used the word homosexuality, he did teach on the subject in Matthew 19. ⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female, '⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Jesus defined marriage as being between a man and a woman and he founded this upon the doctrine of creation. In the same way, the differing roles of men and women were determined at

creation and within the order of creation. Those who promote homosexuality mess with the order of creation in the same way that egalitarians mess with the order of creation.

Reason #2—Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. In verse eleven Paul was referring to Genesis chapter two and in verse fourteen he is quite clearly making reference to Genesis chapter three. Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:13)

By her own admission, Eve was deceived by the serpent. Paul is not stating something that was not already part of the Biblical record but he took it and applied it to the roles of men and women. This may not seem fair to women—to be prohibited from being teachers and elders because Eve was deceived.

First, even though Eve was deceived, God placed the blame squarely on Adam's shoulders. *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned* (Romans 5:12). Eve may have been deceived but by far the larger blame is laid on Adam.

Second, Paul is not saying that Eve was not as smart as Adam and therefore was more easily deceived. As one author wrote, "The serpent deceived Eve by promising her that she could function as a god, independent of the one true God (Gen. 3:4–6). Eve was deceived not because she had an intellectual deficiency, but because of a moral failing"⁵

Finally, it seems that, humanly speaking, the reason that Eve was deceived in the first place was because Satan usurped Adam's authority and went straight to Eve. In this sense, Adam also failed to protect Eve. He allowed her to go head to head with Satan or did not warn her of the dangers that lie ahead.⁶

This is not claiming that men cannot be deceived, but for these two reasons—the order of creation and Eve's deception, God has ordained that men be responsible for teaching and having authority. Is not an issue or essential equality just a difference in respective roles.⁷

Next I want to do my best to briefly explain how verse fifteen fits into this passage. *Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.* We just learned in verse fourteen that Eve's deception made her a "transgressor" therefore, like Adam, she was in need of salvation. But the confusing part is the line about being saved through childbearing and the good works of faith, love, holiness and self-control.

Let's separate the childbearing part from the good works part. First, would you agree that bearing children is the ultimate example of the difference between men and women. I mean, there are a lot of difference, some small and some great, but the ability to bear is the most obvious difference. Paul is using childbearing as a type of symbol for the Biblical role for a woman.⁸ Who created women with the ability to bear children?⁹ God did. Who created women after Adam was created? God did. Just as childbearing was never meant to be the domain of men, so teaching and having authority over men was never meant to be the domain of women. It's just the way God made it.¹⁰

Just to be clear, it doesn't mean that if women don't bear children they cannot be saved or if they bear lots of children they are "more" saved than other women. We know from all of Paul's writing, the rest of the New Testament and the entire Bible that no one is saved through good works but rather by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The good works listed here, like all good works, flow out of genuine saving faith. A good tree will bear good fruit. It cannot do otherwise. Therefore, a saved person will bear the fruit of righteousness, which includes these four—faith, love, holiness and self-control.

Let me leave you with some practical applications.

- As I made clear before, when you interpret Scripture like an egalitarian, it is indeed a slippery slope that has led most churches and most denominations to full blown liberalism. First the drive toward the egalitarian position is driven by cultural relevance. To the watching world, it does not look good to place any limitations on women so the church better not be caught doing this. Second, their line of reasoning essentially comes down to the original lie in the Garden, "Did God really say?" Did God really say that women are not permitted to teach or have authority over a man?" Many people don't want to believe this so it is easier to explain it away. So again, it is not only the position of egalitarianism that is a problem but the larger problem is the method of Biblical interpretation that is used to arrive at this position. It is a dangerous, slippery slope from which few have survived.
- 2. Evangelical feminism has crept into the church more than you probably realize. For example, if you have purchased a NIV Bible in the last two years, it is almost certainly their new, gender inclusive translation. Look how they changed verse twelve.

1984 NIV—I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man. 2011 NIV—I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man.

Here is what an exhaustive review of this translation said about this verse.

Evangelical feminists will love this translation because in one stroke it removes the Bible's main barrier to women pastors and elders. As soon as a church adopts the 2011 NIV, the debate over women's roles in that church will be over, because women pastors and elders can just say, "I'm not assuming authority on my own initiative; it was given to me by the other pastors and elders." Therefore any woman could be a pastor or elder so long as she does not take it upon herself to "assume authority."¹¹

At first glance you might think that the man who wrote this is just an alarmist because how can one word make such a difference? You will have to take my word for it¹², but this one word is one of the linchpins in the argument of egalitarians. Many books have been written about this one word and the translators of the NIV Bible are well aware of this. The change to "assume authority" was no mere accident. This was an intentional adoption of full blown egalitarianism by the translators.

Another example that is relevant to the issue of women in combat is 2 Samuel 23:8. 1984 NIV—These are the names of David's mighty **men**. 2011 NIV—These are the names of David's mighty **warriors**.

Here's a simple question. Were there any mighty *women* in David's army? Of course not, so why eliminate the word "men" when the story, history and the context can only mean men? This is the NIV's attempt at removing all instances of male language when the text clearly necessitates it.

This is just the tip of the iceberg and if you want to know more about the gender inclusive NIV, I have a link in my footnotes. My intention here is not to censor the NIV Bible or to tell you that you should never read it but you do need to be aware of issues like this and to understand that our culture has de-masculated men, families, marriages and the church, and in some cases, churches and Christians are blazing a trail forward. This growing cultural pressure makes it that much more difficult to apply our next principle.

- 3. Men need to lead. This is far from a sermon aimed only at women. Eve was deceived in part because Adam failed to lead and protect her. Families, marriages and church are harmed because men fail to lead and protect these relationships. And what word have we been using in this sermon series that describes leadership? Shepherding. Shepherding your family and shepherding the church is dependent upon strong, Biblical, loving male leadership.
- 4. We want to make sure we elevate the place of women in the church. They are not prohibited from doing anything except serving as an elder. 1 Corinthians makes it clear that women can pray and prophesy in the worship service. There are hundreds of ministries that women can serve in and lead in the local church. Women are supremely valuable and absolutely essential. They are equal in essential value, worth and ability but like men, they have been given God-ordained roles to fulfill

I want to leave you with one women's encouraging and joy-filled experience.

Learning about complementarianism and God's design for men and women has brought a lot of freedom to my life. I think deep down, many women really do want a husband who will lead them, lovingly. But it's so rare, because we're sinners. It does exist, though, and I can attest to that. I believe my husband leads me lovingly, and I am happy to submit (most of the time, you understand, I'm a sinner...) But, in seeking to be the kind of wife who submits to her husband, I don't feel disregarded or inferior, and for that I am grateful.

In our marriage, I am free to express my opinions. I feel heard and appreciated. I do not at all feel like a doormat. My husband is not the lord of me nor does he want to be—praise God! We both want to follow Christ and we have the freedom in our home to do just that. It is a very beautiful thing—not restrictive or terrible like some people would have you believe—given both husband and wife desire to obey God, and not merely please themselves.¹³

May God multiply these kinds of men, women and marriages in our church.

Rich Maurer February 10, 2013

Egalitarian hermeneutics is a slippery slope toward full blown liberalism.

¹ Elisabeth Elliot, The Essence of Femininity: A Personal Perspective in recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, Copyright © 1991 by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Published by Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, p. 401.

² Rebecca Merril Groothuis, Women Caught in the Conflict (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 110.

³ Mark Dever, "Young vs. Old Complementarians," Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood 13, no. 1 (2008): 23–24.

⁴ Wayne Grudem, Is Evangelical Feminism the New Path to Liberalism?, Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, Spring 2004, p. 37.

⁵ Mounce, W. D. (2000). *Vol. 46: Pastoral Epistles*. Word Biblical Commentary (134). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁶ "It does not make sense to say that women were deceived because they lacked knowledge. Such a view would pin the blame on Adam as a teacher, not Eve. If such were Paul's understanding of the events associated with the fall, his admonition that men should teach women (even temporarily) on the basis of the Genesis narrative would be incoherent" (Mounce, W. D. (2000). *Vol. 46: Pastoral Epistles*. Word Biblical Commentary (134). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

⁷ Another important text for understanding the God ordained authority of elders/men comes in 1 Corinthians 11:3. *Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.* Picture this diagram in your mind or else sketch it out on paper. To illustrate the first phrase, I would place Christ in a position over man and then draw an arrow of authority going from Christ down to the man. Would we all agree that Jesus Christ is the authoritative head over every man? There are no disagreements on this first point, correct? Now to illustrate the next phrase, "the head of the woman is man," I would draw the same arrow going down from the man to the woman. Just as Christ holds a position of authority over man, so man holds a position of authority over women. Have I fairly represented this verse in my diagram? You may not like or agree with it, but this is what it says. I have to say, that even as a man I did not fully understand why God set up the lines of authority like this, so I can imagine that some women struggle with this. Also, we still haven't answered the question of how men and women can be equal in worth but have different roles.

The last phrase in verse three is the key to all of our questions: "the head of Christ is God." I would add this phrase to our diagram by placing God over Christ with a line of authority going downward. *Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.* Do you see how the diagram matches the verse? Now the first questions you should be asking at this point are this: Are God the Son and God the Father fully equal to one another? Is Christ in any way inferior to his Father? We have to affirm that there is no difference between the Son and the Father. A multitude of Scriptures affirm that they are both fully God; they are equal in essence and being. The Son is not inferior to the Father. If they are equal in essence and in being, how then can the Father be the authoritative head over the Son? Wouldn't this make the Son inferior? No, the Son is not inferior to the Father for this is impossible, but the Son has taken a subordinate role to the Father. This is what is known as "functional"

subordination": in terms of his function and his divine role, the Son is subordinate to the Father, but in terms of essence and being, they are completely equal. Over thirty times in the gospel of John, Jesus indicated in various ways that he was sent to do the will of the Father. A good example of this is from John 8. *"I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me...for I always do what pleases him."*

His role was subordinate to the role of the Father. He is the Son after all, and the Father is the Father. So when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with palm branches spread before him in worship and adulation, he was doing this according to the will of his Father. He was acting in subordination to his Father's desires. His journey into Jerusalem, which in a few days would lead to his crucifixion, was all accomplished in submission to the will of the Father. This submission was so pervasive that it was impossible for Jesus to act outside the Father's will. Jesus' subordination led him from his conception all the way to the cross. This is what we mean by functional subordination and it was not limited to his earthly ministry, however. It will continue for all eternity.

Do you see how the functional subordination of the Son to the Father is directly linked to the functional subordination of women to men? Men and women are equal in being and worth, but after the pattern of Christ, women are to take a subordinate role to men. Just as Jesus was fully equal to his Father but in submission took on a unique role as the Son, so women are equal to men but in submission are to take on their unique role as women. This changes the entire perspective, does it not? This literally changes everything when it comes to the roles of men and women in the church. God has created us as equals, but with different roles to fulfill. In other words, women who want to take the role of authority away from men are trying to subvert their God-given role as women. And men who refuse to lead are likewise trying to subvert their God-given role as men. Every bit of these roles of authority and submission are rooted in the eternal Godhead. The essence of the eternal relationships of the triune God are reflected in the Biblical roles of men and women. When God said, "Let us make man in our image," the functional subordination of the Son to the Father was an undeniable part of the image of God. If you deny these roles, you are aspiring to work against the created order. If you deny these roles, you are denying the very image of God stamped upon your soul.

I think this answers the question about "fairness" in regard to the differing roles of authority and submission between men and women. If someone is to say, "It's not fair that women should have to submit to men," you could respond by saying, "Is it fair that Christ should submit to his Father?" It's almost a non-sensical question, because it is simply the way God has ordained it. It's not a question of fairness but rather a matter of living according to the way God has created us. ⁸ "This somewhat parallels Paul's instruction to the widows in 1 Tim 5: they were living recklessly and reproachfully (cf. 2:9–10); they should remarry, bear children, and like the godly widows they should pursue good deeds." (Mounce, W. D. (2000). *Vol. 46: Pastoral Epistles*. Word Biblical Commentary (146). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

⁹ "The example of bearing children is probably chosen because the false teachers are downplaying the importance of marriage (cf. 1 Tim 3:4, 12; 4:3) and therefore probably also of childbirth." (Mounce, p. 146.)

¹⁰ "He selects childbearing because it is the most notable example of the divinely intended difference in role between men and women, and most women throughout history have had children. . . . To select childbearing is another indication that the argument is transcultural, for childbearing is not limited to a particular culture, but is a permanent and ongoing difference between men and women. The fact that God has ordained that women and only women bear

children indicates that the differences in role between men and women are rooted in the created order." (Andreas Kostenberger, Thomas Schreiner, Women in the Church: An Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15, Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, Michigan, ©1995, 2005, p. 151.) ¹¹ <u>An Evaluation of Gender Language in the 2011 Edition of the NIV Bible</u>, p. 7. ¹² O read <u>this article</u> as a start or this book, Andreas Kostenberger, Thomas Schreiner, Women in the

Church: An Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15, Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, Michigan, ©1995, 2005 ¹³ Leanne Swift, https://www.cbmw.org/a-complementarian-girls-joy/